

Shoaf Mine and Coke Works  
H.C. Frick Company  
Off T 472, East of Shoaf  
Shoaf  
Payette County  
Pennsylvania

HAER No. PA-259

HAER  
PA,  
26-SHO,  
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

SHOAF MINE AND COKE WORKS

HAER No. PA-259

HAER  
PA  
25-SHD,  
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Location: East side of Shoaf, off T 472, Georges Township, Shoaf, Fayette County, Pennsylvania

Date of Construction: 1904-05

Builder: H.C. Frick Coke Company

Present Owner: Max Noble

Present Use: abandoned

Significance: The Shoaf coke works is the most intact beehive-oven coke plant in Fayette County, and possibly in southwestern Pennsylvania. In addition, several lorries and coke pulling machines survive at Shoaf.

Project Information: In February 1987, the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) and the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) began a multi-year historical and architectural documentation project in southwestern Pennsylvania. Carried out in conjunction with America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), HAER undertook a comprehensive inventory of Blair, Cambria, Fayette, and Indiana counties as the first step in identifying the region's surviving historic engineering works and industrial resources.

The results of this project have been published in Fayette County, Pennsylvania: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites (1990), edited by Sarah H. Heald and produced by HABS/HAER for the National Park Service.

Compiler: Christine E. Davis, Gray Fitzsimons, Sarah H. Heald, and Rolla L. Queen, Historians

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History:

**DESCRIPTION:** The Shoaf coke works is the most intact beehive-oven coke plant in Fayette County, and possibly in southwestern Pennsylvania. It contains one battery of double-block and one battery of bank beehive ovens, for a total of 302 ovens. In addition, several lorries which delivered coal from the tippie into the ovens, and five coke pulling machines survive at Shoaf. Coke Machine No. 1 dates from ca. 1905 and was originally used at the Leisenring No. 1 Coke Works, Coke Machine No. 2 dates from 1907 and served the Bute (West Leisenring) Coke Works, and Coke Machine No. 3 dates from 1913 and served the Monarch (Leisenring No.3 ) Coke Works. The two other coke machines are in fair condition and date from 1946. These contain double-ram bars that speeded the removal of coke from the ovens. Both of these coke machines were manufactured at Ricks' Foundry (See Ricks' Foundry) in Uniontown.

A tippie stands north of the coke ovens. Purchased by Max Noble, owner of the Shoaf Coke Works, from an anthracite colliery near Pottstown, Pennsylvania, and moved to Shoaf about 1963, the steel-frame tippie probably dates from the late 1950s. The coal mine and mine buildings are located across a small intermittently flowing stream which feeds into York Run to the south. The drift mine entrance is situated on the hillside which extends west towards the town of Shoaf. Adjacent to the mine on the steeply sloping hill is the powerhouse, a one-story brick building measuring about 28' x 22' that was erected in 1905. To the north, also on the hillside, is the former supply house, a tall one-story brick building with a gable roof, erected about 1910. Below the mine, on the west side of the stream, stands the machine shop. The tall one-story building was built in 1905 and contains common-bond red-brick walls, a gable roof, and riveted steel roof trusses. It measures about 30' x 20' and has a one-story concrete shed-roof addition off the east facade. On the east side of the stream there are two concrete-block one-story buildings erected in the 1960s. The larger of the two measures about 25' x 15' and served as an engine house. The smaller one contains a gable roof and served as an office.

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**HISTORY:** The H. C. Frick Coke Company constructed the coke works and mine at Shoaf in 1904-05. Located in the southernmost extent of the Connellsville coke region, the drift mine had 969 acres of assigned coal. During its first years of operation the company employed about seventy miners and coke oven workers. The mine and coke works remained in operation until 1922 when, after the shutdown as a result of the bituminous miner's strike, the Frick Coke Company idled the Shoaf operation. U.S. Steel restarted the Shoaf coke works during World War II and the site remained active until 1951. After laying idle for seven years, the property was sold to Max Noble, who had operated the nearby Hoover Coke Works in the early 1940s. Mr. Noble initially obtained coal for the ovens from the Masontown area, bringing it in by truck. Soon after acquiring the property, however, he commenced strip mining coal from an area north of the coke works.

Insurance Map Showing Surface Lines, Rights of Way, Buildings, Pipelines, Etc., at the Shoaf Mine of the H. C. Frick Coke Company, Georges Township, Fayette County, Pennsylvania, January 1909. Original on file in the Resource Management Office of the United States Steel Corporation, Uniontown, Pa.

Map of Connellsville Coke Region and Adjacent Territory, Western Pennsylvania. n.p., ca. 1905 -1913.

Map of the Connellsville Coke Region and Adjacent Fields. Uniontown: South Penn Engineering Company, 1913.

Map of the Connellsville Coke Region and Adjacent Fields. Uniontown: South Penn Engineering Company, 1921.

Noble, Max. Owner of the Shoaf Coke Works, Shoaf, Pa. Interview, May 1990.

Report of the Department of Mines of Pennsylvania: Bituminous Region, 1904, Harrisburg: William Stanley Ray, State Printer 1905.